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About 6000 species and 1183 genera, with probably nearly as many subspecies and subgenera, are marshaled in due order in the first four fasciculi aside from synonyms, with full bibliographical references to each, including not only the original place of description but nearly all of the more important subsequent references, including geographical references to localities. The labor involved in this compilation is thus beyond easy conception, and its value to Dr. Trouessart's fellow-workers is inestimable. J. A. A.

Generic and Family Names of Rodents. — Since the completion of that portion of Dr. Trouessart's *Catalogus Mammalium* treating of the Rodents, two important papers have appeared relating especially to the generic and family names of this numerous order of mammals. The first, by Mr. Oldfield Thomas, curator of mammals in the British Museum, is entitled "On the Genera of Rodents: an attempt to bring up to date the current arrangement of the order."[1] The other, by Dr. T. S. Palmer, of the Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, is entitled "A List of the Generic and Family Names of Rodents."[2]

As noted by Mr. Thomas, one of the most important previous papers on the same subject was Mr. Alston's "On the Classification of the Order Glires," published in 1876. Mr. Alston was extremely conservative in his views, recognizing only 18 families and 100 genera, as against 21 families and 159 genera admitted by Mr. Thomas. "Of the additional 59 genera," says Mr. Thomas, "just about one-half are formed by the breaking up of old genera, and half are altogether new discoveries." Many old names, however, have had to be changed to bring them into conformity with current rules of nomenclature. On this point Mr. Thomas says: "It is with the greatest regret that I have had to use a good many names unfamiliar to English naturalists, but the evidence in every case is so clear as to leave no room for doubt, and none are mere matters of opinion. Recognizing that the ultimate use of these names is inevitable, I think the sooner a knowledge of them is disseminated the sooner will the intermediate stage of confusion be passed through and done with." Not only are we glad to see so eminent an authority take this sensible position, but we are also gratified to find that he rejects emendations, using names in all cases as originally published by the author proposing them. A seriously disturbing element in the stability of names is the tendency, on the part of a few wiseacres, to change names to suit their ideas of correct classical form, often to the extent of a radical transformation of an old name into a practically new one. It seems, for purposes of convenience, far better to extend the law of priority to the form of names as well as to the names themselves, since it is coming to be more and more generally accepted that a name is merely a convenient handle to a fact and need have no necessary significance. While it is desirable that all new names should be correctly formed, it is not necessary nor even desirable that old names should be discarded on account of faulty construction, nor even emended to suit our ideas of propriety.

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[1] *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*, 1896, pp. 1012–28.

[2] *Proc. Biolog. Society of Washington*, vol. xi (Dec. 7, 1897), pp. 241–70.

Mr. Thomas divides the Rodents, as has long been customary, into two suborders — Simplicidentati and Duplicidentati, the latter consisting of the Hares and Picas, and the former including the rest of the order. The Simplicidentati are divided into five superfamily groups — Anomaluri, Sciuromorpha, Aplodontiæ, Myomorpha, Hystricomorpha. The families admitted in addition to those recognized by Alston are Bathyergidæ, Heteromyidæ, Erethizontidæ, and Pedetidæ. The American Porcupines are for the first time distinguished as a family from those of the Old World. References are given to the place of original description of the genera, but not for the higher groups; subgenera and synonyms are not included in the list.

Dr. Palmer's paper admirably supplements Mr. Thomas's, inasmuch as it gives references for the higher groups and includes subgenera and synonyms. The references here given for the higher groups are a great convenience, as they are generally omitted; a glance at Dr. Palmer's list, however, shows which among several names for the same group has priority. Dr. Palmer's paper is further "an attempt to bring together *all* the names, generic and subgeneric, ever proposed for Rodents." Reference to the place of publication is omitted, only the name of the author, the date of publication, and the type species, whenever determinable, being given, or in the absence of a type species all the species originally referred to the genus. Great care has been taken to give the actual date of publication, as distinguished from the ostensible or apparent date, wherever possible, as is the case in a large number of instances.

According to Dr. Palmer, the present list contains more than 600 generic and subgeneric names, or more than twice the number given by Marschall in 1873, and comprises about "15 per cent of the entire number of generic and subgeneric names ever proposed for mammals." The arrangement is strictly alphabetical as regards not only the families but the genera and subgenera within the families, except in the case of the Muridæ, with its 200 names, which are alphabetized under the subfamilies.

These three lists — Dr. Trouessart's, Mr. Thomas's, and Dr. Palmer's — supplement each other admirably, the omissions in one being supplied by the other two, so that the work of the specialist in this group has now become greatly simplified and lightened as regards its nomenclatorial side.

J. A. A.

A New Human Tapeworm. — In 1896 Prof. H. B. Ward, of the University of Nebraska, announced the discovery of a new human tapeworm, two specimens of which had been received by him from a Lincoln, Nebraska, physician. The new species was described as possessing characters in many respects intermediate between those of the two well-known species of Tænia found in man (*T. saginata* and *T. solium*), and for that reason was named by Ward *Tænia confusa*.

Only one of the two specimens received by Ward bore the scolex or head, which was "remarkably small," and unfortunately was detached by him for more careful study than was possible in its natural position. Ward's published description and figure of this scolex, he admits, would answer well for that of Dipylidium, and he is not now himself certain that he did not confuse the scolex, in the course of its preparation for microscopic examination, with that of a Dipylidium. That important portion, therefore, of the description of the new species, which concerns the scolex, must be held in abeyance until additional specimens are obtained.

Michael F. Guyer, a pupil of Professor Ward, in a recently published paper,[1] gives a detailed account of the anatomy of the new species as made out from a careful study of the specimens received by Ward in a headless condition and, unfortunately, none too well preserved.

Guyer finds that the proglottides of the new species are about as numerous as those of *T. solium*, but much longer and narrower, making its total length two or three times that of *T. solium*, and about the same as that of *T. saginata*, which, however, bears nearly twice as many proglottides. The branches of the uterus, one of the most conspicuous characters of a ripe proglottis, number from fourteen to twenty; in *T. solium* there are from seven to ten branches, and in *T. saginata* from twenty to thirty.

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[1] *Zool. Jahr.*, Bd. xi (1898), pp. 1–24, Taf. 28.